CLEAN **SEPARATE** **COOK** **CHILL**

Clean

Illness-causing bacteria can survive in many places around your kitchen, including your hands, utensils, and cutting boards.

Unless you wash your hands, utensils, and surfaces the *right* way, you could spread bacteria to your food, and your family.

- **Wash hands before, during and after preparing food. Then again before eating.**

  - Wet your hands with warm or cold running water and apply soap.

  - Rub your hands together to make a lather and scrub them well. Be sure to scrub the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails. Bacteria can hide out here too!

  - Continue rubbing hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum "Happy Birthday" from beginning to end twice.

  - Rinse your hands well under running water.

  - Dry your hands using a clean towel or air dry.

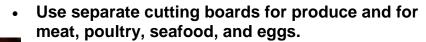- **Wash surfaces and utensils after each use.**

  - Use paper towels or clean cloths to wipe up kitchen surfaces or spills. Wash cloths often in the hot cycle of your washing machine.

  - Wash cutting boards, dishes, utensils, and counter tops with hot, soapy water after preparing each food item and before you go on to the next item.

  - For Sanitation, use of 1 ½* Teaspoons   of unscented, liquid chlorine bleach in 1 gallon of water to wash hard surfaces and utensils.
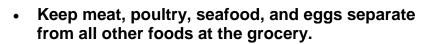   * Wisconsin DCF regulation.

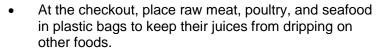Source: Food Safety.gov   This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Separate--Don't cross-contaminate

Even after you've cleaned your hands and surfaces thoroughly, raw meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs can still spread illness-causing bacteria to ready-to-eat foods—unless you keep them separate.

- **Use separate cutting boards for produce and for meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs.**

  - Use one cutting board for fresh produce, and one for raw meat, poultry, or seafood.

  - Use separate plates and utensils for cooked and raw foods.

  - Before using them again, thoroughly wash plates, utensils, and cutting boards that held raw meat, poultry, seafood, or eggs.

- **Keep meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs separate from all other foods at the grocery.**

  - At the checkout, place raw meat, poultry, and seafood in plastic bags to keep their juices from dripping on other foods.

- **Keep meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs separate from all other foods in the fridge.**

  - Place raw meat, poultry, and seafood in containers or sealed plastic bags to prevent their juices from dripping or leaking onto other foods. If you're not planning to use these foods within a few days, freeze them instead.

  - Keep eggs in their original carton and store them in the main compartment of the refrigerator—not in the door

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Cook

Did you know that the bacteria that cause food poisoning multiply quickest in the "Danger Zone" between 40˚ and 140˚ Fahrenheit?

And while many people think they can tell when food is "done" simply by checking its color and texture, there's no way to be sure it's safe without following a few important but simple steps.

- **Use a food thermometer.**
    - Cooked food is safe only after it's been heated to a high enough temperature to kill harmful bacteria. Color and texture alone won't tell you whether your food is done. Instead, use a food thermometer to be sure.

        - When you think your food is done, place the food thermometer in the thickest part of the food, making sure not to touch bone, fat, or gristle.

        - Compare your thermometer reading to our Minimum Cooking Temperatures Chart to be sure it's reached a safe temperature.

        - Clean your food thermometer with hot, soapy water after each use.

- **Keep food hot after cooking (at 140 ˚F or above).**
    - The possibility of bacterial growth actually increases as food cools after cooking because the drop in temperature allows bacteria to thrive.

- **Microwave food thoroughly (to 165 ˚F).**
    - To make sure harmful bacteria have been killed in your foods, it's important to microwave them to 165˚ or higher.

    - When you microwave, stir your food in the middle of heating.

    - If the food label says, "Let stand for x minutes after cooking," don't skimp on the standing time. Letting your microwaved food sit for a few minutes actually helps your food cook more completely by allowing colder areas of food time to absorb heat from hotter areas of food. That extra minute or two could mean the difference between a delicious meal and food poisoning.

    - After waiting a few minutes, check the food with a food thermometer to make sure it is 165˚F or above.

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Chill

Did you know that illness-causing bacteria can grow in perishable foods within two hours unless you refrigerate them? (And if the temperature is 90 ˚F or higher during the summer, cut that time down to one hour!)

- **Refrigerate perishable foods within two hours.**

  - Pack your refrigerator with care. To properly chill food (and slow bacteria growth), cold air must be allowed to circulate in your fridge. For this reason, it's important not to over-stuff your fridge.

  - Your fridge should be between 40 ˚F and 32 ˚F.

  - Get perishable foods into the fridge or freezer within two hours. In the summer months, cut this time down to one hour.

  - Remember to store leftovers within two hours as well. By dividing leftovers into several clean, shallow containers, you'll allow them to chill faster.

- **Freezing**

  - Freezing does not destroy harmful bacteria, but it does keep food safe until you can cook it.

  - Your freezer should be 0 ˚F or below.

- **Never thaw or marinate foods on the counter.**

  - Many people are surprised at this tip. But since bacteria can multiply rapidly at room temperature, thawing or marinating foods on the counter is one of the riskiest things you can do when preparing food for your family.

    - **Thaw in the refrigerator.** Normally, it should be ready to use the next day.

    - **Thaw in the microwave.** Faster thawing can also be accomplished in the microwave. Simply follow instructions in your owner's manual for thawing. As with thawing in cold water, food thawed in the microwave should be cooked immediately.

    - **Cook without thawing.** If you don't have enough time to thaw food, just remember, it is safe to cook foods from a frozen state—but your cooking time will be approximately 50% longer than fully thawed meat or poultry**.**

    - To marinate food safely, always marinate it in the refrigerator.